

**Toward Genuine Complementarity of Man and Woman**  
**Denver Mile High Congress**  
**March 31, 1995**

**I. Introduction**

A. Delighted to meet with Catechists who work to restore men and women to the Divine likeness as: "...with John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit begins the restoration to man of "the divine likeness" pre-figuring what he would achieve with and in Christ. John's baptism was for repentance; baptism in water and the Spirit will be a new birth." #720

B. My own background is the combination of an education in Philosophy and Religious Consecration as a Sister of Mercy

1. Studied and taught philosophy for many years in a secular university with a particular interest in the person, respective identities of men and women, and community

2. Vocation as 'spouse of Christ' dedicated through the practice of the evangelical councils to bear witness to the Eternal Word through the action of the One Spirit which joins us all

3. Practically speaking, at this conference to offer some logical distinctions and structures of language and argument that may help to clarify what the *Catechism* actually says about gender identity.

- a. Today will focus on complementarity and men and women

- b. Yesterday focused on gender and language

- c. The works sheets provided offer outline, selected paragraphs, and some charts relevant to the themes discussed on both days for participants to take home with them

C. Introduction of philosophical principles to help structure study of gender and complementarity in the Catechism

1. The 'concept of person' as a soul/body (spiritual and material) composit

- a. The soul offers us the possibility of immortal participate life in God through grace which enters the essence of our soul

- b. The soul has faculties of intellect (understand the truth) and will (chose the good)- their operation is our responsibility
- c. Having a body makes us as persons capable of acts integrating the data of the senses (or powers) and the passions through exercise of intellect and will
- d. These acts can be virtuous or vicious depending upon our relation to truth and to the good
- v. Our genus is animal, and our specific difference is rationality. By our acts we can become more like God or more like animals.

2. The concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' as differentiating men and women by many levels:

- a. sex often used to refer to biological differentiation, with special relevance to the capacities for generation (male and female)
- b. gender often used to refer to psycho-social differentiation of men and women with special reference to one's identity as a woman or man, with masculine and/or feminine characteristics
- c. danger in separating these two concepts, in a kind of dualism when the person is a unity a human being, as a man or a woman.

3. The 'theory of analogy' as a comparison between two things in which there is a similarity and difference.

- a. horizontal analogy: a comparison between two similar kinds of beings (e.g. a woman is to a daughter like a man is to a son)- here the analogy is discovered by observation of the senses and by reason
- b. spiritual (or transcendental) analogy: a comparison between two different kinds of beings (e.g. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a pearl, or like yeast, or like seeds planted on rock, in good soil, etc.)- here the analogy is discovered by faith working with observation of the senses and by reason. As Jesus tells us, not everyone understands the analogies in parables, but only those to whom it is revealed (Mat. 13)
- c. in this discussion of complementarity of man and woman the ability to engage in proper analogical thinking is crucial

i. when the similarity between two things is based on an equal dignity, and when there is also a significant difference between these two things, we can speak of them as being complementary to one another

complan → horizontal a principle  
 ii. in this sense we can say that the members of the Holy Trinity <sup>One God - 3 Persons</sup> are complementary; that a husband and wife are complementary; <sup>express as two separate persons</sup> and that there are complementary vocations within the Church <sup>several</sup>

iii. and that there is an analogy or resemblance between the Divine Communion of Persons, the communion of persons in the human family, and the communion of persons with different vocations in the Church

comp. not trans. analogy but no complementarity  
 iv. but there is no complementarity between the Divine Communion of Persons and human communities of persons because there is no equality between the Divine analogates and the human analogates

C. My goal is to offer catechetical aids for helping catechists provide opportunity for others to come to conversion to the fullness of the Catholic Faith.

review  
 1. Conversion of Intellect to the truth of the Faith:  
 "Endowed with a spiritual soul, with intellect and with free will, the human person is from his very conception ordered to God and destined for eternal beatitude. He pursues his perfection in "seeking and loving what is true and good." (GS 15 #2)-(#1711)

(a) to love what is true we must know what is true

(b) the catechist then must learn what is true in order to be able to help others in conversion of mind, or reason, or intellect and in the education of conscience as a judgment of reason

2. Conversion of Will to the goodness of the Faith:

(a) it is not enough to simply know what is true, but we must also choose to believe what is true, and choose to appropriate what is good in our thoughts and actions

b. "The Catechism emphasizes the exposition of doctrine. It seeks to help deepen understanding of the deposit of faith. In this way it is oriented toward the maturing of that faith, its putting down roots in personal life and its shining forth in personal conduct." (#23)

3. Conversion of the **Heart**, or religious conversion of the whole person, who is taken over by the love of God.

a. The catechism emphasizes over and over again the need for conversion of the heart: "From the Sermon on the Mount onwards, Jesus insists on *conversion of heart...*" (#2608)

b. In the conversion of heart the whole person is turned again towards God, the passions, senses, intellect, and will are integrated.

c. The catechism emphasizes also the important role of the sacraments, especially of the Eucharist and Reconciliation in conversion of heart

d. It also emphasizes the great blessings that occur to the Christian community as an effect of this total conversion

4. Turn now to the topic of "Toward Genuine Complementarity of Man and Woman:

a. The presentation will follow the three phases of our relation to the Holy Trinity in the Creation, Fall, and Redemption

b. It will end with a short reflection on the call to Perfection of the Spirit and the Bride (#2550)

## II. The Principle of Complementarity in the Trinity

A. The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit have equal dignity by their shared divinity; and yet each Divine Person is distinct by virtue of His unique identity. The Principle of Complementarity is in the Trinity, but One Divine Being, so different from human complementarity where there are separate beings complementary to one another

1. The nature of the Trinity is carefully explained in the *Catechism* as the "central mystery of Christian faith and life." (#234)

2. Each aspect of what we have called the principle of complementarity is carefully delineated:

a. Equal dignity: "The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire...Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature." (#253)

b. Significant differentiation: "The divine persons are really distinct from one another..." "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinction from one another...The are distinct from one another in their relations of origin: 'It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds.' The divine Unity is Triune." (254)

### 3. The Holy Trinity is a Communion of Divine Persons- a Communion of Love

a. "God is love: God's very being is love." #221

b. God calls us to share this love: " By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange." #221

c. A Christian understanding of genuine complementarity among men and women must is situated in this fundamental dogma of identity of the Holy Trinity.

## III. Complementarity in the Creation of Man and Woman in the Image and Likeness of God

A. First principle of complementarity: every individual man and woman created in the "image of God" with equal dignity

Image of God  
↓  
Equal dignity

1. The principle of equal dignity is described in the *Catechism* as flowing from equality of origin in God and equality of redemption through Christ. (#1934: "Created in the image of the one God and equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin. Redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, all are called to participate in the same divine beatitude: all therefore enjoy an equal dignity."

a. The individual rational soul, as the image of God, which both men and women have, has two faculties of intellect and will. (#1705: "By virtue of his soul and his spiritual powers of intellect and will, man is endowed with freedom, an "outstanding manifestation of the divine image."

b. This image of God, found in the intellect and will of each individual man or woman, needs to be developed to its full perfection. Catechises can help precisely in this striving for perfection. (# 1704: "The human person participates in the light and power of the divine Spirit. By his



reason, he is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he is capable of directing himself towards his true good. He finds his perfection "in seeking and loving what is true and good." The intellect seeks the true, and the will seeks the good.

2. The *Catechism* explicitly states that this equal dignity includes both men and women:

a. # 2393 "By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity."

b. #2334 "In creating men 'male and female', God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity." "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God." (MD #6.)

c. (#2203: In creating man and woman, God instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution. Its members are persons equal in dignity.")

B. Second Principle of Complementarity: a man and a woman is created in "the likeness" of God as significantly different from one another.

1. The human person is not just a rational soul, but is a composit, of soul and body, or of a spiritual and a material nature. In this composit nature man and woman are created as different ways of being human. Gender differentiation, in its specific form of male and female, is a consequence of being created as a composit of soul and body.

a. The first subsection of Section III; "Male and female He created Them" is entitled: "Equality and difference willed by God." This implies that the principle of complementarity, as I have described it, is directly willed by God when he created man and woman. This is substantiated by the text which follows: #369, "Man and woman have been created, which is to say, willed by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman."

b. This theme is repeated several times #355: "Man occupies a unique place in creation: 1) he is "in the image of God"; II, in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; III) he is created "male and female."

1. likeness  
God  
signif. diff  
+  
communication

c. However, the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God as equal and significantly different, does not imply that God has a gendered identity. The *Catechism* is explicit on this point: #370 "In no way is God in man's image: He is neither man nor woman. God is pure spirit in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes."

d. Also there is another difference in God's identity and human identity. Even though God is a Trinity of Three distinct Persons, the Three Persons are one being, one God; while distinct human persons would also be distinct human beings.

e. And yet even with these differences, there is a similarity of likeness in the fertility that is found both in the communion of love in God and in the communion of love between woman and man. As the same #370 continues But the respective "perfections" of man and woman reflect something of the infinite perfection of God: those of a mother and those of a father and husband." This link between "likeness" and "perfection" will be further developed a later section of this lecture when we consider Redemption P)

2. The *Catechism* makes a distinction between creation in the image of God, as an individual man or woman endowed with rational soul (intellect and will) and creation in the likeness of God, as different human persons (men and women) are called into a communion of love

X a. #1702: "The divine image is present in every man. It shines forth in the communion of persons, in the likeness of the union of the divine persons among themselves."

b. This likeness is found in the communion of love itself, in the union of significantly different persons.

### C. Complementarity and the Communion of love

1. A man and a woman, equal in dignity and significantly different are established by creation as the prime model of a human community of love: #383: "God did not create man a solitary being. From the beginning 'male and female he created them' (Gen 1:27) This partnership of man and woman constitutes the first form of communion between persons." (GS 12#4).

2. A man and woman, equal in dignity and significantly different are also a model of complementarity: #372: "Man and woman were made "for each other"--- not that God left them half made and incomplete: he created them to be a communion

of persons, in which each can be "helpmate" to the other, for they are equal as persons ("bone of my bones...") and complementarity as masculine and feminine. In marriage God unites them in such a way that, by, forming "one flesh," they can transmit human life: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth."

3. There is an analogy between the complementarity and Divine Love within the Holy Trinity and the complementarity and human love between human persons. — all persons The *Catechism* refers to this as a "resemblance": #1878: "There is a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love." This is repeated in the summary #1890 with the prescription ought: "There is a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fraternity that men ought to establish among themselves."

i. The "ought" signifies that something happened after creation to demand this prescription

ii. remind again that the complementarity in the Trinity is different (3 Divine Persons in God as One Being, a man and a woman as complementary to one another, and several persons, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc as complementary to one another in different vocations in the Church

iii. distortion to link one human person with one Divine Person. It is the complementarity in the communion of human persons in love which resembles the complementarity in the communion of love among the Divine Persons.

ii. We will now turn to what happened, or the Fall.

#### IV: Distortions in complementarity of man and woman in the Fall

##### A. The loss of original justice

1. The *Catechism* refers to the original state of harmony between God, creatures, and the world at the time of creation as a state of "original justice." (#376: The inner harmony of the human person, the harmony between man and woman and finally the harmony between the first couple and all creation, comprised the state called "original justice.")

2. The loss of original justice by the Fall: the first parents, Adam and Eve, as a consequence of their decision to reject the order established by God, lost this gift of harmony for the human race: (#379: The entire harmony of original justice, foreseen for man in God's plan, will be lost by the sin of our first parents.")



a. The image of God in each man and woman is dimmed

- i. the intellect becomes darkened
- ii. the will is weakened
- iii. the relation between the intellect, will, and passions disordered

iv. (#1707: "[Man] still desires the good, but his nature bears the wound of original sin. he is now inclined to evil and subject to error: [-then quoting Gaudium et Spes-] Man is divided in himself. As a result, the whole live of men, both individual and social, shows itself to be a struggle, a dramatic one, between good and evil, between light and darkness.")

v. and the heart is "wretched and oppressed" (#1739: "This first alienation [of original sin] engendered a multitude of others. From its outset, human history attests the wretchedness and oppression born of the human heart in consequence of the abuse of freedom.")

b. The likeness of the Trinity as a communion of love is lost between women and men-

i. men and women can choose whether or not to act in such a way as to live in the image and likeness of God (in the operations of their intellect and will) and in their acts with respect to one another- or choose not to.

ii. When a person chooses to act more like God, he or she becomes more like God- when he or she chooses to act more like a beast, then he or she becomes more like a beast.

iii. The Law which was <sup>given by</sup> give to God, is "powerless--- to save man deprived of the divine "likeness", without the saving action of Christ and the Holy Spirit (#708)

3. These changes are summarized in *The Catechism*. The effects of this loss are felt in every aspect of man and woman having been created in the image and likeness of God: (#400: "The harmony in which they had found themselves, thanks to original justice, is now destroyed: the control of the soul's spiritual faculties over the body is shattered; the union of man and woman becomes subject to tensions, their relations henceforth marked by lust and domination." )

## B. The reign of disorder

1. If we consider again the two principles of complementarity, or equal dignity and significant differentiation, we can say that the disorder of original sin can be seen in domination- the destruction of equal dignity, or lust- the destruction of significant differentiation. Through original sin, genuine complementarity is lost.

a. The loss of equal dignity tends towards a state of gender polarity, in which members of one gender are perceived as naturally superior to members of the other gender

b. The loss of significant differentiation tends towards a state of uni-gender or uni-sex in which genuine differences between women and men are ignored or destroyed

c. While the sinful orientations of domination and lust are found in men and women who choose both gender polarity and gender unity, but there does seem a greater proportion of attitude of tendencies towards domination in polarity theories and of lust in unisex theories.

2. The *Catechism* describes the effects of this loss of original justice, or original complementarity as follows: (#1607: According to faith, the disorder we notice so painfully does not stem from the nature of man and woman, nor from the nature of their relations, but from sin. As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. Their relations were distorted by mutual recriminations; their mutual attraction, the Creator's own gift, changed into a relationship of domination and lust; and the beautiful vocation of man and woman to be fruitful, multiply and subdue the earth was burdened by the pain of childbirth and the toil of work.)

a. Genesis 3:14-20 suggests that original sin effects women and men differently in some respects:

i. the woman is told that God will make the evil serpent and woman with her offspring enemies of one another- and that her desire (or lust) will be for (of to possess) her husband

ii. the man is told that he will Lord it over the woman (or dominate her).

iii. The Holy Father Pope John Paul II states explicitly in Mulieris Dignitatem that these tendencies towards possession and domination are effects of original sin, and not part of the original nature of women and men. We will quote from #10 to emphasize this point: "Therefore when we read in the biblical description the words addressed to the woman": 'your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you' (Gen 3:16), we discover a break and a constant threat precisely in regard to this "unity of the two" which corresponds to the dignity of the image and likeness of God in both of them. But this threat is more serious for the woman, since domination takes the place of "being a sincere gift" and therefore living "for the other:"...

iv. The Catechism notes that "...the law given to Moses aims at protecting the wife from arbitrary domination by the husband, even though according to the Lord's words it still carries traces of man's "hardness of heart" which was the reason Moses permitted men to divorce their wives." #1610)

b. However, when the Catechism teaches about the effects of original sin for man and woman, it tends to emphasize <sup>3, 2</sup> the effects on the original communion of love, rather than emphasize specific differences of its effects on woman or man:

i. (#1606: "[The union between man and woman] has always been threatened by discord, a spirit of domination, infidelity, jealousy and conflicts that can escalate into hatred and separation.")

ii. In one example the sin of "domination" is directly related to a person interfering through artificial insemination with the communion of love through technology: "The act which brings the child into existence is no longer an act by which two persons give themselves to one another, but one that "entrusts the life and identity of the embryo into the power of doctors and biologists and establishes the domination of technology over the origin and destiny of the human person. Such a relationship of domination is in itself contrary to the dignity and equality that must be common <sup>4</sup> to parents and children." #2377.

iii. the rupture of the communion of love in sacramental marriage by adultery is described as an injustice (#2381) and as a sin of idolatry (#2380)

iv. polygamy is described as "directly contrary to the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning, because it is contrary to the equal personal dignity of men and women who in matrimony give themselves with a love that is total and therefore unique and exclusive." #2387

v. and "trial marriages" or living together outside of marriage are described as "not able to protect a relationship between a man and a woman...from inconstancy of desires of whim...Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another." (#2391)

c. The model of discord between a woman and a man, as <sup>a</sup>the first effect of original sin, is the prime model for all human discord. So the breaking of the original complementarity between a man and a woman is the prime model of the breaking of the union of love between all human communities of persons

i. (# 1469: "Sin damages or even breaks fraternal communion."

ii. Sin destroys the balance of original complementarity in which persons build a communion of love based upon the genuine complementarity of persons which demands an equal dignity of the persons and a significant differentiation of the persons, giving themselves to one another for the building up of the common good.

iii. Sin destroys the balance of original complementarity by destroying equal dignity through domination

iv. Sin destroys the balance of original complementarity by destroying significant differentiation

## **V. Restoration of Original Complementarity of man and woman through Jesus Christ, True God and True Man- Fully God and Fully Man**

(#464: "The unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God does not mean that Jesus Christ is part God and part man, nor does it imply that he is the result of a confused mixture of the divine and the human. He became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.")

## A. Jesus Christ and the Redemption of Gender

1. There is no gender in Jesus Christ's Divine Nature, as Son of the Father, because God is Spirit

a. (#370: "God is pure spirit in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes." )

2. There is gender in Jesus Christ as Man, Son of Mary, in his Human Nature, because man is material and spiritual.

a. Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary as a male human being, gendered as a male.

i. (#470: "Because 'human nature was assumed, not absorbed," in the mysterious union of the Incarnation, the Church <sup>was</sup> led over the course of centuries to confess the full reality of Christ's human soul, with its operations of intellect and will, and of his human body."

ii. Jesus Christ has a human intellect, a human will, a human heart, and a human body (#471, 475, 478,) and these were all perfectly in union with his Divine intellect and Divine will (#482)

iii. The Son of God became the son of man through the union of God with Mary (#484: "Mary was invited to conceive him in who the "whole fullness of deity" would dwell "bodily.")- We become united to Jesus Christ through adoption as sons and daughters of God (see first lecture)

iv. Jesus Christ the Bridegroom, gives himself completely to His Bride, the Church - We become united to Jesus Christ through nuptial union (see first lecture) brides.

3. Jesus Christ, because ~~he combines~~ <sup>is joined with</sup> His Divine nature ~~and~~ his gendered human nature, redeems the effects of original sin on men and women by his own death on a cross. Jesus Christ suffered and died as a man, a male human being, both offering the Sacrifice and being the sacrificial victim to break the bonds of sin and reorder the disorder and heal the ruptures of the effects of sin

a. (#517: "Christ's whole life is a mystery of *redemption*. Redemption comes to us above all through the blood of his cross, but this mystery is at work through Christ's entire life.")



b. He helps purify the image of God in each woman and man: (#518: "All Jesus did, said and suffered had for its aim restoring fallen man to his original vocation:" ) He was one with us and One with God- this identity alone- as True God and True man was able to restore us to our original vocation

c. Jesus Christ's sacrificial offering helps restore the likeness of God among women and men (#518 cont.- When Christ became incarnate and was made man, he recapitulated in himself the long history of mankind and procured for us a 'short cut' to salvation, so that what we had lost in Adam, that is, being in the image and likeness of God, we might recover in Christ Jesus. For this reason Christ experienced all the stages of life, thereby giving communion with God to all men.")

d. We can not recover this lost perfection in ourselves and among ourselves of the image and likeness of God without the help of Grace: (#1608: "To heal the wounds of sin, man and woman need the help of the grace that God in his infinite mercy never refuses them. Without his help man and woman cannot achieve the union of their lives for which God created them 'in the beginning.'")

4. Sum: Jesus Christ, truly God and truly man, in becoming man, restores in humanity to the "likeness" through the action of the Holy Spirit- (#705: "Disfigured by sin and death, man remains "in the image of God," in the image of the Son, but is deprived "of the glory of God," or his "likeness". The promise made to Abraham inaugurates the economy of salvation, at the culmination of which the Son himself will assume that "image" and restore it in the Father's "likeness" by giving it again its Glory, the Spirit who is "the giver of life.")

5. The Trinity completes the redemption of humanity through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, by his resurrection. (# 648: "Christ's Resurrection is an object of faith in that it is a transcendent intervention of God himself in creation and history. In it the three divine persons act together as one, and manifest their own proper characteristics. The Father's power raised up Christ his Son and by doing so perfectly introduced his Son's humanity, including his body, into the Trinity...")

i. Through the Resurrection of Christ's glorified body, humanity and gender is introduced into the Trinity. Jesus is resurrected as fully Man, as a male human being

ii. Through our own resurrection of the body, our gendered identity as a woman or a man will have eternal life. What these bodies will be like is a great mystery: (#999: Christ is raised with his own body: "See my

hands and my feet, that it is I myself"; but he did not return to an earthly life. So in him, "all of them will rise again with their own bodies which they now bear," but Christ "will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body," into a "spiritual body."

iii. Mary, who is Assumed into Heaven at the end of her life, is there as a woman, as the Mother of Jesus and our Mother

iv. This central fact of the Faith, of the hope in resurrection is not something just posited for the end of our lives, or for the end of time, It is a Christian reality accessible to us now (#1002: "Christ will raise us up "on the last day"; but it is also true that, in a certain way, we have already risen with Christ. For, by virtue of the Holy Spirit, Christian life is already now on earth a participation in the death and Resurrection of Christ.") This fact opens to the reality of Christian vocation. By Baptism we "die with Christ" and rise again. (#1010)

#### IV: Examples in the Catechism of Men and Women who Perfectly Followed the Call of God

Cat.  
wonderful  
balance

A: Witnesses to Faith: #165: "It is then we must turn to the *witnesses of faith*: to Abraham, who, in hope...believed against hope", to the Virgin Mary who, in "her pilgrimage of faith," walked into the "night of faith" sharing the darkness of her son's suffering and death; and to so many others. Therefore, since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses..."

1. The Virgin Mary is the key model for complementarity, in her relation with Joseph; and of spousal love in her relation of Virgin bride in her Fiat to God and Mother of the Son of God

a. The prime model of human holiness is the "all-holy Virgin Mary (#2030)

b. Mary is the prime model of "faith and charity" for the Church (#967)

c. She is the "exemplary realization" (*typus*) of the Church

d. In union with Christ to restore everyone to supernatural life, she is the Mother of all in the Church. (#68)

? 2. It refers to the final battle anticipated in the book of *Genesis* between the serpent and the Woman, and of the final victory of a descendent of hers. (#410)

B: The Catechism refers to and quotes from many different men and women saints: *complementary examples*

*writes* 1. For example in just one paragraph #313: "We know that in everything God works for good for those who love him," it refers to St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Thomas More, and Dame Julian of Norwich." And the previous three paragraphs had references to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine.

*OT* 2. Along with Abraham, it refers to Hannah, Deborah, Ruth, Judith, Esther (#489)

*Witness of Resurrection* 3. Along with the Apostles, it mentions "Mary Magdelene and the holy Women...who were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves." (#641-3)

*prayer* 4. And along with the Eastern Jesus Prayer traditionally associated with wandering hermits, it mentions the prayer of St. Joan of Arc, who "died with the one word "Jesus" on her lips" (#435)

5. In all of these examples we see the *Catechism* itself providing a context of genuine complementarity among men and women for the building up of the common good of the Faith.

C. The Catechism also suggests contemporary areas within which men and women can work for the common good with particular reference to reestablishing the original justice that was distorted through original sin:

1. It calls for a support of contemporary Christian piety "creatively combines the divine and the human, Christ and Mary, spirit and body, communion and institution, person and community, faith and homeland, intelligence and emotion. This wisdom is a Christian humanism that radically affirms the dignity of every person as a child of God, establishes a basic fraternity, teaching people to encounter nature and understand work, provides reasons for joy and humour even in the midst of a very hard life." (#1676)

2. It also calls for work to eliminate situations which undermine the fundamental equality of all men and women: "The equality of men rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it: '(GS #29,2) Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights on the grounds of sex, race, colour, social conditions, language or religion, must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design." (#1935)

3. In fact, *the Catechism* summarizes the work for original justice in the contemporary context precisely by identifying the two key principles of complementarity: equal dignity and significant differentiation:

- a. #1945: "The equality of men concerns their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it."
- b. #1946: "The differences among persons belong to God's plan, who wills that we should need one another. These differences should encourage charity."
- c. We will now turn to a consideration of how our different vocations in the church relate to this virtue of charity, or the call to love one another as God loves us.

## **V Vocation: The Call to Follow Jesus Christ (Hearing the Voice of the Bridegroom)**

### **1. Vocation ("to become like God") - 1st principle: equal dignity**

#### **1. Vocation to holiness and perfection- ("to perfect the image of God") - virtue**

- a. In a discussion of the first commandment, the vocation to perfect the image and likeness of God is explicitly stated in the *Catechism*. (#2084: "The revelation of the vocation and truth of man is linked to the revelation of God. Man's vocation is to make God manifest by acting in conformity with his creation "in the image and likeness of God.")
- b. (#1701: "It is in Christ, "the image of the invisible God," that man has been created "in the image and likeness of the Creator. It is in Christ, redeemer and Saviour, that the divine image, disfigured in man by the first sin, has been restored to its original beauty and ennobled by the grace of God"
- c. Every woman and man are equally called to become perfect- in the universal call to holiness: (#825: "...all the faithful, whatever their condition and or state--though each in his own way--are called by the Lord to that perfection of sanctity by which the Father himself is perfect.")--- The use of the word 'as' in Jesus' phrase: "You therefore, must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect... [demands] a vital participation , coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God." #2842) We can not do it by ourselves
- d. This perfection, in part calls for the development of Christian virtues: (intellect know what is true, conscience know what is the right thing do to in this situation, and will to choose act. ("A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good...The goal of a virtuous life is to become



like God." #1803) The *Catechism* describes all the fundamental virtues that a Christian needs to practice.

2. Vocation to communion of persons- (to share the Divine likeness by participate existence with God)- vocation to Divine Beatitude through love

- a. Personal Virtue- (#1700: The dignity of the human person is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God; it is fulfilled in his vocation to divine beatitude. It is essential to a human being freely to direct himself to this fulfilment. By his deliberate actions, the human person does, or does not, conform to the good promised by God and attested by moral conscience.")
- b. Contemplative prayer- #2713: "Contemplative prayer is a covenant relationship established by God within our hearts. Contemplative prayer is a communion in which the Holy Trinity conforms man, the image of God, "to his likeness."
- c. Prayer of petition to God, our Father by Adoption: (#2784: The free gift of adoption requires on our part continual conversion and new life. Praying to our Father should develop in us two fundamental dispositions: First, the desire to become like him though created in his image, we are restored to his likeness by grace; and we must respond to this grace...Second, a humble and trusting heart that enables us "to turn and become like children: for it is to "little children" that the Father is revealed.")
- d. Christian prayer in general is "the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant." #2563)
- e. human community- (#1877: "The vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God and to be transformed into the image of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form since each of us is called to enter into the divine beatitude; it also concerns the human community as a whole.")
- f. The *Catechism* emphasizes the important place of choice in learning how to live the Beatitudes as the possibility of living in the spirit of the Kingdom of heaven while still on earth: #1721: "Beatitude makes us "partakers of the divine nature" and of eternal life. With beatitude, man enters into the glory of Christ and into the joy of the Trinitarian life.")



## B. Vocation ("to become like God")- 2nd principle- genuine complementarity

1. Diversity and unity in the Church: (equal dignity and significant differentiation): (#814: "From the beginning, this one Church has been marked by a great diversity which comes from both the variety of God's gifts and the diversity of those who receive them. Within the unity of the People of God, a multiplicity of peoples and cultures is gathered together. Among the Church's members, there are different gifts, offices, conditions and ways of life.")

a. "sin and the burden of its consequences constantly threaten the gift of unity" 814

b. acts of charity rebuild the bonds of unity and harmony 815

c. The Holy spirit is the source of the Church's "unity in diversity" (#809)

## 2. Vocation to love= response to God's spousal initiative

a. the call to love- (#2331: "God inscribed in the humanity of man and woman the vocation, and thus the capacity and responsibility, of love and communion.)

b. The *Catechism* states explicitly: "Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being." (#2392) see also (#2822)

c. The call to love results from being created in the image and likeness of God (#1603: "God who created man out of love also calls him to love--- the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love. Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man.") -note The Catechism uses 'image' here rather than 'likeness'

d. The perfecting of the image and likeness is a great drama in which God initiates a call, and a person responds: (#2567: "God calls man first...God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response. As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation.")

e. So all Christians have the fundamental vocation to love, but in the Church there are three traditionally different ways in which to live out that

*but many ways*

vocation in a specified manner: Vocation to Sacramental Marriage, Vocation of Ordination to Sacramental Priesthood, and Vocation to Religious Life

- i. We will now consider how each of these three vocations holds a prime or particular responsibility for one way of living the fundamental vocation to love in the Church
- ii. The other vocations analogously participate in this prime responsibility, as do those vocations to the single life, or secular institutes, etc.

## VI: Vocation as Specified within the Church

### A. Sacramental Marriage: the specific vocation to conjugal love

1. The Sixth Commandment considers in some detail the complementarity of man and woman within a marriage: (#2333: Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity. Physical, moral, and spiritual difference and complementarity are oriented towards the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.")

a. this spousal love between two being, when perfect, as God's love is perfect, is marked by certain characteristics-

i. free, total, mutual self-gifts, (#1646 )

ii. indissolubility, (#1644, #1648)

iii. fertility. (#1644, #2363-2367)

b. These characteristics are summarized as follows: (#1643: "Conjugal love involves a totality; in which all the elements of the person enter--- appeal of the body and instinct, power of feeling and affectivity, aspiration of the spirit and of will. It aims at a deeply personal unity, a unity that, beyond union in one flesh, leads to forming one heart and soul; it demands indissolubility and faithfulness in definitive mutual giving; and it is open to fertility."

*repeats*

c. The marriage and family itself constitutes a communion of persons in complement with one another (#372: "Man and woman were made "for each other"---not that God left them half made and incomplete: he created them to be a communion of persons, in which each can be "helpmate" to the other, for they are equal as persons (bone of my bones..) and complementary as masculine and feminine. In marriage God unites them in such a way that, by forming "one flesh", they can transmit human life: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." By transmitting human life to their descendants, man and woman as spouses and parents cooperate in a unique way in the Creator's work.")

d. There are some differences in the ways God is the perfect generator, and a woman or a man lives out the call to perfection in conjugal generation: (#370: "God is pure spirit in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes. But the respective "perfections" of man and woman reflect something of the infinite perfection of God: those of a mother and those of a father and husband.")

e. The *Catechism* states clearly that the Christian family, as a communion of persons images the Divine Communion of Persons: ("The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father's work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task." #2205)

2. We could say that the prime area of responsibility of those called into Sacramental Marriage is that of living Conjugal love in a genuine complementarity which issues in the generation of children through a vital participation in the life of the Holy Trinity

a. Persons with other vocations in the Church analogously enter into complement spiritual unions which generate "spiritual children" through a vital participation in the life of the Trinity

b. This is a horizontal analogy among human beings in which the spousal bond and generative fertility that is the prime area of responsibility of a man and a woman joined through sacramental marriage participates in a special way as the prime analogate in the Creation of the Holy Trinity, by the Father, in the Son, and Through the action of the Holy Spirit.

d. This is the call to love through creative union.

## B. Sacramental Priesthood: the vocation to Ordination or love "in Persona Christi"

Gr. Sacram  
Buker

1. Some are called among those in the Church to the vocation of Sacramental Priest. "It is the same priest, Christ Jesus, whose sacred person his minister truly represents. Now the minister, by reason of the sacerdotal consecration which he has received, is truly made like to the high priest and possesses the authority to act in the power and place of the person of Christ himself." #1548

a. Especially at the moment of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of the Bridegroom and Bride, (#1321, #1617, #1621), Christ offers himself in total self gift for the Church. At the words of consecration: Jesus speaks with the mouth and tongue of the Ordained Priest who directly quotes his words at the Last Supper, Jesus makes the offering with the hands of the Ordained Priest, and the body offered is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is both the sacrifice and the one offering the sacrifice.

b. The Ordained Priest, a male human being, is freely used by Jesus Christ the High Priest to reenact his own passion, death, and resurrection each time the Eucharist is celebrated. (#876) "The one sent by the Lord does not speak and act on his own authority, but by virtue of Christ's authority; not as a member of the community, but speaking to it in the name of Christ. No one can bestow grace on himself; it must be given and offered. This fact presupposes ministers of grace, authorized and empowered by Christ. From him, they receive the mission and faculty ("the sacred power") to act *in persona Christi Capitis*." )

c. The *Catechism* explicitly states that "Only a baptized man (vir) validly receives sacred ordination." [All sacraments involve the union of spirit and matter, and each sacrament has certain material conditions that allow it to validly occur. The water and chrism are necessary for the Sacrament of Baptism, the bread and wine are necessary for the Sacrament of the Eucharist, a diseased or injured person for the sacrament of the sick, and a male human being for the Sacrament of Orders] 1527

d. All vocations assume a specific call by God within the Church. "No one has a right to receive the sacrament of Holy Orders. Indeed no one claims this office for himself; he is called to it by God." (#1578)

2. We could say that a prime area of responsibility of Ordained Priests is the reenactment of the Redemptive Sacrifice of Jesus Christ in union with the Holy Trinity.

as Bridegroom



Sr. Sarah  
Butler

a. All other Christians analogously participate in the common priesthood of the faithful. (#1591: "The whole church is a priestly people. Through Baptism all the faithful share in the priesthood of Christ. This participation is called the "common priesthood of the faithful."

b. The analogous participation in the priesthood of Christ, and the Ordained Priesthood, is though participation in the passion, death, and resurrection that Christian life consists out of total self gift in love for others.

c. The vocation to love, embodied in the call to Ordained Priesthood is the vocation to love by giving the self up to death out of love for his Bride, the Church. This is the call to love through redemptive suffering.

d. The Ordained priest is the prime model of this spousal love of Christ, as bridegroom, *total self-gift, irrevocable, fertile*  
*initiator of love (Bridegroom)*

### C. Religious Consecration and Vocation: Eschatological Sign of love

1. The Consecrated virgin has traditionally represented the prime model <sup>of this</sup> type of vocation in the Church. "(#923: "Virgins who... are betrothed mystically to Christ, the Son of God, and are dedicated to the service of the Church. By this solemn rite,...the virgin is "constituted... a sacred person, a transcendent sign of the Church's love for Christ, and an eschatological image of this heavenly Bride of Christ and of the life to come."

2. The life of those living under religious vows, or the evangelical councils of chastity, poverty, and obedience, also serve as eschatological signs of the union of Christ, the Bridegroom, with the members of the Church, his bride, at the end of time. (# 926: "Religious life derives from the mystery of the Church. It is a gift she has received from her Lord, a gift she offers as a stable way of life to the faithful called by God to profess the counsels. Thus, the Church can both show forth Christ and acknowledge herself to be the Saviour's bride. Religious life in its various forms is called to signify the very charity of God in the language of our time."

a. religious then are called to be living signs in the world of God's love, of perfect charity

b. Women religious, by their habit, ring, and veil serve as living signs of this spousal love in which they are joined, in one spirit, with Christ, the spouse. A Woman religious, by the quality of the perfection of the living



of her vows may become a prime model of the bride for this spiritual (rather than conjugal) spousal love.

c. A religious community, by the quality of the perfection of union in charity in their fraternal life together and in their common apostolate may also serve as an eschatological sign of the spousal love of God.

d. Other vocations, such as men religious, lay, and ordained priests may participate analogously in this bridal response to the invitation of God to nuptial love.

#### D. The Three Prime Complement Vocations to Love

all aspects  
here by all  
vocations, but  
a special emphasis  
for those in the Church  
Bridal

1. To summarize: Those called to Conjugal Love in Sacramental Marriage provide the prime model which participates in a special way in the mystery of Creation; those called to Holy Orders provide the prime model which participates in a special way in the sacrificial love of redemptive suffering of Jesus Christ, as High Priest and Sacrificial Victim in the mystery of Redemption; and those called to Consecration and Religious life provide the prime model which participates in a special way in the perfection of charity as an eschatological sign of the end times and the Beatific Union with the Holy Trinity.

2. Each person called to a specific vocation participates in the particular prime model of love for the whole Church in one way, and participates in the non-prime model of love analogously.

3. The demands and the gifts of each vocation are significantly different, although each vocation has equal dignity. So there is a complementarity in the relations among the three prime vocations. — and among all by extension

4. Therefore we ought to love and support those in different vocations as we would our own spouse, in the model of the Christian call to love creatively, love redemptively, and love eschatologically. Loving in this way leads to a genuine complementarity among men and women.

5. If we enter into this genuine practice of love through supporting the different vocations in the communion of persons which is the Church, and by striving to live our own vocation to the best of our ability in union with the grace offered through participate existence in the Holy Trinity, then we will begin to experience Beatitude here and now in the world. The *Catechism* specifically links this call to perfect communion with the spousal love of the Spirit and the Bride: (#2550: "On this way of perfection, the Spirit and the Bride call whoever hears them to perfect communion with God: [and quoting St. Augustine]--'There will true glory

be, where no one will be praised by mistake of flattery; true honour will not be refused to the worthy, nor granted to the unworthy; likewise, no unworthy will pretend to be worthy, where only those who are worthy will be admitted. There true peace will reign, where no one will experience opposition either <sup>from</sup> self or others. God himself will be virtue's reward; he gives virtue and has promised to give himself as the best and greatest reward that could exist.... 'I shall be their God and they will be my people...'...God himself will be the goal of our desires; we shall contemplate him without end, love him without surfeit, praise him without weariness. This gift, this state, this act, like eternal life itself, will assuredly be common to all." #2550)

E. Return to the call of a catechist: to help towards a conversion of intellect, will, and heart to the truth, goodness, and transformation of love present in the Catholic Faith

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